

Didcot mastered in quarter-final clash

Didcot Town 1, Wycombe Wanderers 4

DIDCOT TOWN still cherish the memory of their victory over Wycombe Wanderers 11 years ago, when they won 3-2 in a quarter-final clash of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup on February 18, 1957—but on Saturday, in another Senior Cup quarter-final encounter, Wycombe were never in danger of defeat.

All Didcot members of the premier division of the Hellenic League had to offer was hard work and enthusiasm, which in the end was not enough.

Constructive football was made nearly impossible by the state of the pitch. Before the start the top surface looked very heavy and by half-time the players had churned it into a quagmire.

However, what little fluent play did materialise came from the Wanderers. Fielding a comparatively new 1 ft-wing pair in Viv Busby and Steve Holmes, in place of the injured Tony Horseman and out-of-form Les Merrick, Wycombe seized the initiative from the start and scored in the sixth minute.

Mid-field link Barry Baker started the move by supplying Worley with an accurate pass, and he rounded two defenders before crossing. Len's cross appeared to have gone too far but Holmes nodded the ball back into the goalmouth and Samuels dived full-length to head home.

SAMUELS SHINES

Considering Keith Samuels was only passed fit 24 hours before the match, he was in tremendous form, leading the line with menace, instigating a number of attacks and was always around to help finish them off.

Little was seen of Didcot's forwards, although there was a very interesting personal duel between Rundle and McCabe, with the 'strong-man' of the Wycombe defence coming out on top on most occasions. Ironically enough it was Rundle's mistake — his only blemish in an otherwise copy-book display — which presented Didcot with their equaliser in the 33rd minute.

Wanderers' pivot obviously took his eye off Prior's through-pass, watching Eldridge dashing down the middle. As a result Rundle completely missed his clearance, leaving Eldridge with a clear path to goal and the inside-left went to the side of the oncoming Maskell before slotting the ball in.

Wycombe regained the upper

hand four minutes before the interval. Eyes headed a haphazard clearance back into the Didcot half and Gale flicked on to Samuels, who, with his back to the goal, turned smartly and shot low into the right-hand corner.

STAMINA TELLS

It was obvious that the second-half would not be a test of skill but of stamina. The strength-sapping pitch was now in a shocking condition, and it was almost impossible to make progress down the middle.

The best policy to overcome the conditions would have been to keep feeding the wings, where it was comparatively clear. Wycombe soon adopted this way of tactical thinking in the second period.

Within six minutes they had scored again. Holmes made ground along the left wing and fired over a cross which Busby headed on straight to Worley, who mis-hit his shot but nevertheless maintained enough power to beat Haynes' despairing lunge on the line.

Wanderers now eased the tempo, content to conserve their energy for a last-desperate fling by Didcot. It did not come.

BUSBY'S REWARD

Instead, Wycombe scored a fourth, six minutes from the end. It was particularly fitting that Viv Busby should be the marksman, for he had toiled all afternoon without much success, going close on a number of occasions with several headers which sneaked over the bar.

Samuels, displaying remarkable energy at such a late stage of the game, burst through the middle towards goal. Keeper Jeffries foiled Keith's effort and after a mêlée in the goalmouth Busby, sitting on the ground, prodded the ball in.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Eyes; V. Faulkner, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, V. Busby, S. Holmes.